



Wake County Beekeepers Association

February 2024

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 13, 2024

**Wake County Commons Building:
4011 Cary Drive, Raleigh 27610**

WORKSHOP: Frame and Hive Body Assembly (NOTE TIME) 6:30 PM

MEETING: Guest Speaker, Dr. Maureen Peterson 7:30 PM
TOPIC: "Stings and Things"

Snacks (homemade and pre-packaged) will be available



Wake County Beekeepers Association is an ALL-VOLUNTEER group! It takes many hands to make a successful organization. Perhaps there is an opportunity for you to assist your fellow beekeepers. A little or a lot, it is all beneficial!

Hospitality Committee: Volunteers are needed to bring a homemade snack to the regular meeting, once or twice in 2024. Additional opportunities will become available for other social gatherings.

State Fair Booth Committee: Assist with designing and building state fair booth; Help recruit contributions (entries).

Fundraiser Team: Assist with the planning and execution of fundraiser(s) for NCSU Apiculture Endowment Donation.

Mentor Volunteers: Assist new beekeepers with "figuring it all out!" Contact Cary Orange at caryo@yahoo.com

Swarm Team On-Call: Volunteer to take and pass along information, and possibly respond to swarm calls from the public. Volunteers are needed for each geographic area in Wake Co: southeast, southwest, northeast, northwest and central parts of the county. To sign up go to <https://wakecountybeekeepers.org/Swarm-List-Guidelines>

To sign up and/or see **additional volunteer opportunities**, and see where you can serve that best fits your time, interests, and abilities, please fill out the survey at <https://forms.gle/w8oVkjjqNSDJtAS7>

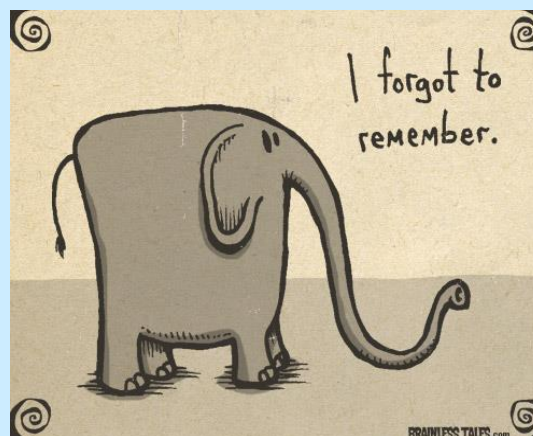
Oh no! Did you forget to renew your membership for 2024?

Membership renewal was due January 1. If unpaid by February 1, names will be removed from the rolls, and you will not get any more amazing and helpful information like this newsletter! A reminder that memberships must be in good standing BY MARCH 15 in order to take advantage of the ability to borrow club equipment in 2024.

Already removed but want to rejoin? Just log back in and pay this year's dues! Remember: dues are now \$20 for individuals and \$30 for households. If you run into any issues contact April Reeves at secretary@wakecountybeekeepers.org

Have you decided not to renew for this year? We would love to know your reasons so that we may improve our club and how we may better serve our members.

<https://forms.gle/UewsrjnrDseyvzEe6>



NEW! Bi-Annual Swap Shop!

This year, in March and August, you will have the opportunity to buy/sell/trade beekeeping and related equipment with your fellow club members from 6:30pm-7pm, in the parking lot where we are meeting. **ONLY CURRENT CLUB MEMBERS MAY SELL.** Anyone can buy.



You can advertise what you are bringing on the Beekeepers of Wake County Facebook page prior to the swap.

IMPORTANT CAVEAT:

1. You must take home what doesn't sell.
2. You CANNOT donate what doesn't sell to that evening's raffle.

2024 is a pilot year for this and if it is successful, we hope to make it a permanent "perk" to membership and meeting attendance.

Got an Idea for a Topic or Speaker for our Monthly Meetings? Let us know here:

<https://forms.gle/2YkkN8Hmxi1dnWiV9>



Mark Your Calendars!

*State Spring Conference: March 7-9, in New Bern, NC. Go to ncbeekeepers.org to learn more. Multiple Wake Co. members are already going. Won't you join us?

*Next meeting: March 12: Varroa Management

*Swap Shop March 12 6:30-7:00 (see below)

*April Meeting, April 9: Wake Co Master Gardeners: "Planting for Pollinators"

January 2024 Financials (through January 30)

INCOME	\$4420.00
Beekeeping School	1870.00
Memberships	2240.00
General Donations	310.00
EXPENSES	\$1619.13
General	503.76
Beekeeping School	1469.13
NCSU Endowment Donation	150.00
CURRENT BANK BALANCE	\$22,030.17

Meet our February Speaker!

Dr. Maureen Peterson spent 29 years in the US military and worked as the Director of Medical Education at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and as an Allergy/Immunology Fellowship Director at the National Capital Consortium Program in Bethesda, MD.



TOPIC: "Stings and Things"

Led by a distinguished former military Allergist, this presentation delves into the critical aspects of stinging insect allergies. Gain valuable insights into the prevalence of these allergies, understand key risk factors and explore the latest advancements in allergy management and treatment. This talk is designed to equip non-medical beekeepers with essential knowledge to safely navigate the challenges posed by stinging insects. Join us for an engaging and professionally enlightening experience, where the world of beekeeping meets the forefront of allergy research.

What would bears be without bees?

Just ears.



Our shortest nights, maybe our coldest too, are behind us. Our bees are likely starting to rear brood again (or maybe they never stopped altogether, that seems to be common here).

Colonies without enough bees may have already perished, but all of mine are holding on so far. A few down to some small clusters, but I was able to stack some very small colonies on the hives of larger colonies. I modified old screened bottom boards by removing the bottom rails and added a 2nd screen (double screened board). This allows residual heat to rise from the hive below into the hive of the smaller colony above it. I had a temp monitor in some of my hives, and the inside tops of the hives were staying noticeably warmer than outside air, so I am sure the small ones are getting a little help. The double screen prevents bees from each colony from touching other, which would pass along queen substance/pheromone with every touch. I want them to operate as distinct colonies with their own queens, so the double screen helps with that (or so I have been taught).

As we get into February, be on the lookout for maple blooms. Few will notice these flowers, as they don't really look like flowers and they occur mostly very high in the trees. But there are a variety of maples here, so the maple bloom lasts an extended period. Bees will take advantage on days warm enough to fly to gather maple nectar and pollen to feed new brood. When dandelions also appear, you can be assured brood rearing in healthy successful colonies will be in full swing.

Last February brought lots of warm days and early swarms. By late March, when I have been used to looking for swarming, probably half of my own nearly 40 colonies had swarmed. I hadn't seen a lot of drones prior, so I found it odd that so many risked poor mating to get in an early swarm.

I have been assembling equipment in order to expand a bit in the spring in anticipation of making up some nucs and beginning a small-scale queen rearing operation. I suppose I will try to start a bit early this year if we have plenty of early blooms.

If you're overwintering bees, plan to do some inspections as often as weekly if you want to avoid swarms. Don't open the hive on cold days (under 55 degrees) but stay tuned to the weather and look for telltale signs of swarming:

1. Queen cell production (will start as queen cups, but if you see larvae inside, the swarm cycle has begun!)
2. Tendency to store nectar in brood cells, even if you provide foundation. Swarming bees in the early nectar flow just don't seem to want to make comb, I assume to save the energy and wax making bees to go out with the swarm. Some beekeepers go so far as to remove nectar filled brood frames, extract and return. This wouldn't be capped honey for consumption, but would be done to try to keep cells open for the queen to lay.
3. Excessive drone production. Part of the swarm cycle is making many drones to mate with all the other swarm related queens in the area.
4. A little later in the season, you may see some gathering on the front of the hive in mild weather as bees wait for the signal to leave. Waiting for this sign is rarely going to be a reliable indicator, however. This tends to happen in the largest colonies, but not every colony waits until it's really large to swarm.

Besides looking out for early swarming, you will want to monitor nectar stores in case the maple flow is interrupted or arrives later. Bees can get dangerously low as late as March and risk starving before the main flow arrives. In the January meeting, I covered winter feeding tips. Even dry sugar, poured on the inner cover, is better than nothing if the bees are close to starving. You can make a sugar brick or softer "fondant" and place it directly on the frames surrounded by a shim or super if you have one ready in time.

Lastly, it's a good idea to get a beginning of season mite count in. We usually cannot do this in February, but if we get long warm spell, I would take advantage of it if you're opening your hives.



← IMAGE shows two smaller colonies stacked with modified double screened bottom boards to allow them to get some residual heat from the ones below.

Sugar "patty" made with powdered sugar and honey placed directly on the frames. This type remains pliable and could be torn or cut to split between colonies if needed. →

